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ABSTRACT

In the first year of a 2-year extension grant, Project PROBE served 341 limited-English-proficient speakers of Spanish and Chinese at 2 New York high schools. The project's aim was to increase career awareness through instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL), native language instruction (NLA), and bilingual content-area courses, enrichment activities, and guidance and counseling. Some courses were taught with computers. Program evaluation based on course grades, language test scores, attendance rates, information from project staff, and classroom observation reveal that the program met its objectives in ESL and student attendance but did not meet its content-area objective. Whether objectives in NLA, student attitudes, cultural heritage, staff development, and parental involvement were met could not be determined. Program strengths include computer use for instruction, existence of career-oriented activities for students, and efforts to improve parent involvement. Recommendations for program improvement include increased efforts to recruit parents for ESL/Americanization classes; a more realistic and consistent content area passing rate; and development or adaptation of instruments to measure student attitudes toward their cultural heritage. (MSE)

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OREA Report

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

PROFESSIONS ORIENTED BILINGUAL EDUCATION (PROJECT PROBE) 1987-88

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EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

PROFESSIONS ORIENTED BILINGUAL EDUCATION
(PROJECT PROBE)
1987-88

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5/22/89

PROFESSIONS ORIENTED BILINGUAL EDUCATION
PROJECT PROBE*
1987-88

SUMMARY

- Project PROBE was fully implemented. During the 1987-88 school year participating students received instruction in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.), Native Language Arts (N.L.A.) in Chinese or Spanish, and bilingual content area instruction. In addition the program provided noninstructional activities in the form of staff training and parental involvement.

- The program met its objectives in E.S.L. and students' attendance rate. It did not meet the content-area course objective. The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment could not determine whether the program had met its objectives in N.L.A., student attitudes, cultural heritage, staff development, and parental involvement because of lack of data.

Project Professions Oriented Bilingual Education (Project PROBE) was a Title VII-funded program of instructional and support services. In the first year of a two-year extension grant (after a three-year funding cycle) the project served 341 limited English proficient (LEP) speakers of Spanish and Chinese at Louis D. Brandeis High School in Manhattan and Sheepshead Bay High School in Brooklyn. Project PROBE's aim was to increase career awareness in participating students through instruction in E.S.L., N.L.A., and bilingual content-area courses, enrichment activities, and guidance and counseling.

Project students attended classes in E.S.L. and N.L.A.. E.S.L. courses at Sheepshead Bay and bilingual mathematics at Brandeis were taught through the computer. The program's career-oriented activities included field trips and conferences. Project staff developed curriculum for bilingual content-area instruction and offered E.S.L. classes for parents of participating students.

The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) evaluated the project using students' course grades, LAB scores, and attendance rates provided by the program, information from school and project staff, and classroom observations.

The Language Assessment Battery (LAB) assessed students' gains in English language skills. Although it was not possible to determine whether the project met its N.L.A. objective, more than 70 percent of the participating students achieved a 65

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*This summary is based on the final evaluation of the "Professions Oriented Bilingual Education (Project PROBE) 1987-88" prepared by the OREA Bilingual Education Evaluation Unit.

percent passing grade in these courses. Project PROBE did not achieve its objective in content area courses. It met its noninstructional objective in students' attendance rate. It was not possible to assess project objectives in student attitudes towards school, cultural heritage, staff development, and parental involvement due to lack of data.

Strengths of the program were the use of computers for instruction, the existence of career-oriented activities for students, and the development of efforts to improve parental involvement. A weakness of the program was administrative difficulties which resulted in the inability to offer E.S.L. classes for students' parents at Brandeis. In addition, the program set a higher passing criterion to assess student achievement in content-area courses than the one used throughout the New York City public schools.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Increase efforts to recruit parents for E.S.L./ Americanization classes.
- Make the passing rate in content area subjects a more realistic 65 percent in accordance with the grade used by New York City high schools.
- If the project plans to maintain an objective in student attitudes toward their cultural heritage, develop or adapt instruments to measure these.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In its first year of a two-year Title VII extension grant (after a three-year funding cycle), the Professions Oriented Bilingual Education project (Project PROBE) provided instructional and supportive services to 239 Spanish-speaking students from Latin America at Louis D. Brandeis High School in Manhattan, and to 102 Vietnamese- and Chinese-speaking students at Sheepshead Bay High School in Brooklyn.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Sheepshead Bay is located in a residential area of Brooklyn where there have been an increasing number of Asian immigrants in the recent past. Brandeis is located on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, where ongoing rehabilitation has resulted in high realty prices and the relocation of large numbers of Hispanics to other parts of the city. Nevertheless, a considerable number of Hispanics still live in the area, especially from the Dominican Republic.

STAFF

A project director and a coordinator, both of whom were in charge of several other Title VII multisite programs, administered Project PROBE from a central office. On-site staff included a resource teacher and a paraprofessional at each of the two participating schools. Title VII partially funded the resource teachers' positions (.6) and totally funded the paraprofessionals' salaries.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROBE's basic goal was to increase career awareness among students of limited English proficiency (LEP) through instruction in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.), Native Language Arts (N.L.A.), and bilingual content area subjects. The project supplemented these courses with career-oriented enrichment activities and services, including a resource/computer center in each school (with computers, software, and audiovisual materials on content area subjects and career education) and personal guidance and career counseling. The project also offered E.S.L./ Americanization classes for students' parents. Brandeis was unable to offer these classes this year because of administrative difficulties, but Sheepshead Bay participated.

Students at both sites received E.S.L. and N.L.A. instruction. Project students at Brandeis participated in bilingual content area classes with the school's other Spanish-speaking students; at Sheepshead Bay, program students were enrolled in content area instruction in Chinese.

The project supplemented existing bilingual programs in the participating schools. At Sheepshead Bay, the bilingual program had difficulties initiating proposed activities because of the lack of Chinese- and Vietnamese-speaking content area teachers. However, the school administration supported the program and hired a bilingual Chinese teacher who assumed the tax-levy duties previously handled by the project resource teacher.

Computer Instruction

PROBE provided computers at both sites for the exclusive use of project students. Brandeis and Sheepshead Bay had assumed the responsibility of financing the computers after the project's budget had been cut the previous year. The project resource rooms at both sites served as centers for all PROBE activities and services. However, the centers' functions varied in response to the type of instruction required by the students. At Sheepshead Bay, staff used the project's computers mainly for E.S.L. instruction, because this was where most students needed additional help. In contrast, at Brandeis the emphasis was on mathematics instruction, as students reportedly needed tutoring in this area. The project maintained an extensive collection of software materials especially designed for the computerized instruction of bilingual mathematics.

Supplementary Activities

Career-oriented enrichment activities included field trips to work places and conferences at which guest lecturers who shared the students' ethnic backgrounds spoke. To enhance ethnic pride, the project sponsored cultural celebrations and music festivals.

Parental Involvement

Project PROBE offered E.S.L. classes for parents at Sheepshead Bay in space provided by the school. In 1987-88, the resource teachers were actively engaged in recruiting parents for

E.S.L. classes through school meetings, telephone contacts, and by mail.

Curriculum Development

Project staff developed curriculum in global history in Chinese and Vietnamese, and in general science and American history in Vietnamese. At Brandeis, the resource teacher devoted more time to curriculum development despite the fact that his time was divided between Project PROBE activities and regular school duties.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Project PROBE students came from Asia, the Caribbean, and North, Central, and South American countries. More than half came from the Dominican Republic, with the next largest group being natives of the People's Republic of China. (See Table 1.)

The majority of the students were recent immigrants; 84.8 percent of those enrolled in the spring had three or fewer years of education in the United States. (The mean for years of education in the U.S. was 2.3 [S.D.=1.6]. The resource teacher at Brandeis reported that most of the students came from poor families, often split apart because of their migration. In many cases, parents came to the U.S. several years before their children. Uncles or other family members often raised those left behind. In some instances, parents returned to the country of origin, leaving the children behind in the U.S., where in addition to studying, they were forced to become self-supporting.

TABLE 1

Number and Percent of Program Students by Country of Birth

Country of Birth	Number	Percent
Dominican Republic	179	52.5
People's Republic of China	66	19.4
Hong Kong	28	8.2
Ecuador	17	5.0
Honduras	14	4.1
Puerto Rico	11	3.2
El Salvador	4	1.1
Mexico	3	.9
Colombia	3	.9
Vietnam	3	.9
Other Asian	3	.9
Costa Rica	2	.6
Chile	2	.6
Taiwan	2	.6
Guatemala	1	.3
Nicaragua	1	.3
Panama	1	.3
Bolivia	1	.3
TOTAL	341[a]	100.1[b]

[a]Data were missing for 12 students.

[b]Total does not equal 100 because of rounding.

- Over half the students were born in the Dominican Republic.
- Almost one-fifth of the students were born in the People's Republic of China.

There was a high rate of mobility among this population, who often missed school to spend time in Puerto Rico or the Dominican Republic.

Project students at Sheepshead Bay were recent arrivals from the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Most of the students from Vietnam were of Chinese background. The largest group came from the People's Republic of China and spoke Cantonese. However, they also understood Mandarin, the dialect used in Chinese instruction at Sheepshead Bay. According to the resource teacher, most of the students' parents were unskilled laborers who worked as restaurant cooks and waiters, baby-sitters, or factory workers for the garment industry. Many of these parents did not speak English.

Most project students were in the tenth grade. (See Table 2.) Overall, 63 percent of the students were overage for their grade placement.

TABLE 2

Number of Program Students by Age and Grade

Age	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
12			1		1
14	13	3			16
15	28	5			33
16	18	36	8	1	63
17	13	51	14	2	80
18	2	30	24	15	71
19		16	18	10	44
20		4	13	7	24
21			2	5	7
TOTAL	74	145	80	40	339*

Overage Students	Programwide				
Number	33	101	57	22	213
Percent	44.6	69.7	71.3	55.0	62.8

Overage Students	Brandeis High School				
Number	20	78	41	16	155
Percent	54.1	72.2	67.2	53.3	65.7

Overage Students	Sheepshead Bay High School				
Number	13	23	16	6	58
Percent	35.1	62.2	84.2	60.0	56.3

Note. Shaded boxes indicate expected age range for grade.

*Data were missing for 14 students.

- In both schools the majority of program students were in the tenth grade.
- Sixty-three percent of the program students were overage for their grade.

II. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) evaluated Project PROBE by examining the results of students' performance on standardized tests, inspecting program records, interviewing project personnel, and observing classes.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Project PROBE proposed instructional objectives in E.S.L., N.L.A., and content area subjects.

English as a Second Language

- As a result of participating in the program, students will demonstrate statistically significant gains in English language development.

Implementation. Project PROBE students at both sites received E.S.L. instruction with the schools' other LEP students. In addition, PROBE staff members conducted regularly-scheduled tutorial sessions for students who requested them during their free or lunch periods. The paraprofessionals tutored students on an individual basis in the resource room.

An OREA field consultant observed an E.S.L. class at Brandeis. The aim of the class was to practice oral and silent reading. Students read a short story and eagerly participated in the question/answer period that followed.

Outcome. To evaluate the program in the area of E.S.L.,

OREA used the Language Assessment Battery (LAB).* Project PROBE provided complete data (level, pretest, and posttest scores) for 132 students. All students in all grades but twelfth made significant gains ($p<.05$). (See Table 3.) OREA performed additional calculations to establish a difference-score effect size**. The results show an effect of .51 for the group, and suggest moderate educational meaningfulness.

The project met its E.S.L. objective.

Native Language Arts

- As a result of participating in the program, 80 percent of the students will demonstrate a significant increase in native language achievement.

Implementation. Both schools provided N.L.A. instruction supervised by the assistant principal (A.P.) of foreign languages.

At Sheepshead Bay, Chinese-speaking PROBE students attended one native language arts class in Mandarin each day. Since there were no qualified teachers of Vietnamese, the school could not

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*The Language Assessment Battery (LAB) was developed by the Board of Education of the City of New York to measure the English-language proficiency of nonnative speakers of English in order to determine whether their level of English proficiency is sufficient to enable them to participate effectively in classes taught in English. Students scoring below the twenty-first percentile on the LAB are entitled to bilingual and E.S.L. services.

**The effect size, developed by Jacob Cohen, is a ratio of the mean gain to the standard deviation of the gain. This ratio provides an index of improvement in standard deviation units irrespective of the size of the sample. Effect size (E.S.) is interpreted to indicate educational meaningfulness, and an E.S. of .80 is thought to be highly meaningful, while one of .20 is considered to be only slightly so.

TABLE 3

Pretest/Post-test N.C.E. Differences on the Language Assessment Battery, by Grade

Grade	Number of Students	Pretest Mean	Pretest S.D.	Post-test Mean	Post-test S.D.	Difference Mean	Difference S.D.	t Value	Effect Size
9	50	7.5	8.6	11.9	10.5	4.4	9.1	3.4*	.48
10	37	8.8	8.7	13.8	10.9	5.0	8.9	3.4*	.56
11	37	10.6	8.2	15.2	10.9	4.6	9.4	2.9*	.49
12	6	14.2	10.6	17.7	11.5	3.5	7.9	1.1	.44
TOTAL	132[a]	9.0	8.6	13.6	10.7	4.6	9.0	5.9*	.55

*$p < .05$

[a]No information on grade level was available for two students.

- All students at all grade levels but twelfth made statistically significant gains on the LAB.
- The overall effect size suggested that gains were of moderate educational meaningfulness.

offer N.L.A. instruction in that language. However, most Vietnamese students had some Chinese background and understood Mandarin.

A field consultant observed a Chinese N.L.A. class at Sheepshead Bay. The objective of the lesson was to read and comprehend a story written by a well-known Chinese writer of the Ching Dynasty. The teacher first gave some background information about the author, explained the structural features of the prose, asked the students to read the text aloud sentence by sentence, and then explained the text. The teacher spoke Mandarin, while most of the students spoke Cantonese. It appeared that the students did not have a problem understanding the teacher or following the lesson; when asked to read out loud, however, some of them had to read in Cantonese. All the students were listening and taking notes, and most of them were ready to respond to the teacher's questions.

Outcome. The proposed objective called for using La Prueba de Lectura* for Spanish-speaking students and a teacher-made instrument for Chinese-speaking students. Since the project reported only the results of teacher-made final examinations for the fall and spring and did not report pre- and post-test scores, OREA could not determine whether Project PROBE had met its N.L.A. objective.

To assess achievement in N.L.A. courses, OREA examined course-passing rates. At Brandeis, in the fall, 92 percent of

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*San Antonio, Tx: Guidance Testing Associates, 1980.

the 126 students passed their N.L.A. courses; in the spring, 73 percent of 62 students passed. At Sheepshead Bay, 98 percent of the students passed in the fall; in the spring, 68 percent passed.

Content Area Subjects

- Eighty percent of the students will achieve a passing grade of 75 percent or better in the areas of mathematics, science, social studies, business, and health-careers courses.

Implementation. At Brandeis, Project PROBE students received bilingual instruction in mathematics, science, and social studies. At Sheepshead Bay, they received it in mathematics and social studies. Program staff members were available in the project office to tutor students in bilingual content area subjects three periods a day.

In a bilingual social studies lesson that an OREA field consultant observed, the topic was the economic and social life of the People's Republic of China. The teacher introduced new vocabulary, lectured, and asked individual students to read aloud selected paragraphs from the text and translate them from English into Chinese. He then distributed two handouts that he had developed, one on new vocabulary with Chinese equivalents and the other with difficult paragraphs from the text and their Chinese translation. Student participation was lively and many volunteered to answer questions and to read aloud and translate.

The field consultant also visited a biology class of ten at Brandeis. The class reviewed Mendel's laws of inheritance by

using computers. Some students were so fascinated that they worked at a faster pace than the teacher. The students then responded to the questions posed by the computer, referring to their classroom notes as necessary. The teacher frequently offered explanations to the students and translated concepts into Spanish.

Outcome. The proportion of students achieving a passing grade of 75 percent in content area subjects ranged from 44 percent in science to 51 percent in mathematics, well below the proposed 80 percent criterion. (See Table 4.) Therefore, the project did not meet this objective. However, if the project had proposed the 65 percent passing grade used by New York City high schools, the results would have differed: project students achieving a grade of 65 ranged from 72 percent in science to 82 percent in social studies.

NONINSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Project PROBE had program objectives relating to student attendance, attitudes, cultural heritage, staff development, and parental involvement.

Attendance

- As a result of participation in the program, the attendance rate of program students will be greater than that of mainstream students.

At Brandeis, the resource teacher monitored attendance and called students in if they missed classes or had low grades. The program staff then offered them tutoring.

TABLE 4

Student Achievement in Content-Area Courses

School	Area	FALL		SPRING		TOTAL	
		Number of Students	Percent Passing[a]	Number of Students	Percent Passing[a]	Passing (at 75)	Passing (at 65)
Brandeis	Mathematics	190	36.8	77	46.8	39.7	71.1
	Science	120	36.7	77	35.1	36.1	67.5
	Social Studies	213	45.1	86	33.7	41.8	79.0
	Business	61	41.0	25	40.0	40.7	74.4
Sheepshead Bay	Mathematics	93	74.2	95	62.1	68.1	85.1
	Science	45	55.6	59	61.0	58.7	81.8
	Social Studies	99	53.5	95	51.6	52.9	86.6
	Business	14	71.4	24	70.8	71.0	89.5
Total	Mathematics	283	49.1	172	55.2	51.4	76.9
	Science	165	41.8	136	46.3	43.8	72.4
	Social Studies	312	47.8	181	43.1	46.1	82.3
	Business	75	46.7	49	55.1	50.0	79.1

[a]The project proposed a passing grade of 75 percent.

- Less than 80 percent of the students passed content-area Courses with at least a 75.

The resource teacher and paraprofessional at Sheepshead Bay monitored attendance and called the parents of absent students.

Since the schools' attendance rates included the attendance of program students, statistical significance between program and school attendance was determined through the application of a z-test for the significance of a proportion*. This procedure tested whether the difference between one proportion (the program's attendance) and a standard proportion (the school's attendance) was greater than could be expected by chance variation.

The overall attendance rate for program students was 90 percent, eight and nine percentage points above the rates of Sheepshead Bay and Brandeis, respectively. The z-test results ($z = 2.04$ and 3.48) indicated that the differences in attendance rates for both schools were statistically significant ($p>.05$). Thus, the program met its attendance objective.

Student Attitudes

- Students will demonstrate an improvement in attitude toward school.

The project did not provide any data relevant to the objective. While OREA could not determine whether project PROBE had met the objective, students' attendance rate was high, suggesting that program students had positive attitudes toward school.

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*Bruning, J.L. and Kintz, B.L.; Computational Handbook of Statistics; Scott, Foresman and Company, 1968.

Cultural Heritage

- Eighty percent of all target students will demonstrate an improvement in attitude toward their cultural heritage.

According to the project director, the instrument proposed to assess this objective was still being revised. Therefore, OREA could not assess accomplishment of the objective. Both schools, however, provided activities aimed at increasing the students' self-pride. These activities included ethnic celebrations and presentations by guest speakers.

Staff Development

- As a result of participation in the program, 85 percent of the staff will demonstrate an increase in their awareness of pupil needs, problems, and professional goals.
- Ninety percent of the program staff will demonstrate professional growth in bilingual methodologies and career-orientation techniques by successfully completing college courses.

Project PROBE did not provide any data to assess this objective. OREA could not determine whether it had been successful in meeting the first staff development objective. Interviews with teachers, staff, the bilingual guidance counselors, the resource teachers, the project director, and the school principals, however, gave evidence of greater awareness of student needs and their problems of acculturation than before the project.

Only 50 percent of Project PROBE staff members successfully completed university courses in areas relevant to the program.

Thus, the program did not achieve its second staff development objective.

Parental Involvement

- As a result of the program, students' parents will demonstrate more parental involvement than parents of mainstream students and will be more supportive of their child's career goals.

The parents' advisory council met bimonthly at Brandeis, and monthly at Sheepshead Bay. At these meetings, project staff informed parents about their children's progress and encouraged them to make suggestions.

The objective called for a comparison between the attendance of program- and mainstream parents at school activities. Because the project did not maintain accurate and complete attendance records, however, OREA could not assess fulfillment of that part of the objective.

Project PROBE offered E.S.L./Americanization classes for students' parents. However, these classes were not given at Brandeis during the year under review because of administrative difficulties. According to the resource teacher, parent attendance at such activities continued to be very low.

At Sheepshead Bay, the school administration continued to provide the space for a parents' E.S.L. class. The resource teacher was actively involved in surveying parental interest and continued to develop and enrich this E.S.L. course.

In 1987-88 program staff made special efforts to inform parents about the new immigration laws and their benefits to

undocumented immigrants. They distributed posters, sent letters home with the students, and had representatives from the community and the immigration office speak with the students in the hope that this information would eventually reach their parents.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

• This year, Project PROBE continued to achieve its objectives in English language achievement and attendance. As in previous years, the project set a stringent criterion for meeting the content area objective. OREA had recommended that it revise the criterion because it was unrealistic for the targeted population. This year's results indicate that the situation has remained the same and the objectives, as stated, are still unrealistic for the targeted students.

OREA could not assess objective attainment in a number of areas (N.L.A., student attitudes, cultural heritage, staff development, parental involvement) because the project did not provide the necessary data.

It appeared that rapport and coordination between the schools' administrations and the project staff were good. The principals of both schools appeared to be sensitive and aware of the special needs of the two cultural groups served by their schools. The principals of the participating schools regarded Project PROBE as a vehicle for enriching LEP students and the mainstream population as well. Whenever possible, they integrated PROBE students into the mainstream for activities such as games, festivals, music, and health education classes. During these activities PROBE students practiced their English language skills and got to know students from other cultures.

The use of the computer and the support by nonprogram staff at the participating sites were real strengths of the program.

The lack of instruments with which to collect data and the lack of data to assess a number of objectives were the main weaknesses. Although parental involvement was low, the staff were involved in making significant efforts to increase parental participation.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Increase efforts to recruit parents for E.S.L./ Americanization classes.
- Make the passing rate in content area subjects a more realistic 65 percent, in accordance with the grade used by New York City high schools.
- If the project plans to maintain an objective in student attitudes toward their cultural heritage, develop or adapt instruments to measure these.